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LETTER DATED 10 DECEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 8 December 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, describing the latest invasion of Iraqi territory by Turkey, launched during the night of 4 to 5 December 1997, and urging the United Nations to meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 8 December 1997 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the fact that, during the night of 4 to 5 December 1997, the Turkish armed forces, supported by tanks and armoured vehicles, launched a further invasion into the territory of the Republic of Iraq, towards the region of Hakruk.

This armed aggression against Iraqi territory by the Turkish armed forces is in flagrant contradiction with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law and poses a real threat to international peace and security in a region which continues to be subject to all kinds of military and political intervention which have undermined its security and stability.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq has strongly condemned the repeated aggressions and violations by the Turkish armed forces, which constitute a serious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, are incompatible with the principles of good neighbourliness and are a breach of the 1926 Iraq-Turkey boundary agreement. The Government of Iraq has asked Turkey to withdraw its invading troops immediately and to desist from its repeated acts of aggression.

The Iraqi Government categorically rejects the arguments put forward by Turkey to justify the continuing incursions into its territory, knowing as it does that the pretext invoked, namely, the pursuit of rebel elements opposed to the Turkish Government in order to put an end to their activities, does not authorize the Turkish armed forces to invade Iraqi territory or violate its integrity. Turkey uses spurious arguments to justify its acts of aggression when, in fact, it is the policy pursued by the Turkish Government, in cooperating with the United States and United Kingdom Governments to impose an unlawful no-flight zone, that is to blame for the tensions in northern Iraq.

Iraq holds the Turkish Government entirely responsible for these acts of aggression against its territory and for their consequences, regardless of the arguments used to justify them, and reserves its right under international law to determine an appropriate response to this military aggression and to seek compensation for the damage caused by these repeated Turkish breaches and violations of Iraq's territory and airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these acts of aggression.

The Government of Iraq renews its call to the Government of Turkey to renounce this dangerous policy, which clearly contributes to perpetuating the tensions in northern Iraq, in cooperation with the United States and United Kingdom Governments, as part of a scheme to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

While reiterating, through you, my country's call to the Turkish Government to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I express the hope that the United Nations will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Iraq